DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 027 564 CG 003 463

By-Taylor, Eleanor K.; And Others

Administrative Approaches to Staff Development in Public Welfare Agencies.

Spons Agency-Social and Rehabilitation Service (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 68
Note-30p.
Available from-Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 ($.25)
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors-*Administrative Problems, *Administrator Guides, Inservice Education, Planning, Professional Training, *Staff Improvement, *Welfare Agencies

The quality of services provided by a public welfare agency is directly related to the competency of its staff, which is, in turn, directly related to agency efforts to recruit and retain personnel and to provide for their continuing professional growth, for staff development. The importance of a staff development program in the agency administrative structure and in coordinating staff effort has been increasingly realized. This publication: (1) presents the organizational problems faced by public agency administrators and staff in expounding and administering meaningful programs, (2) underlines principles suggestive of carrying out administrative response more easily and effectively, and (3) applies those principles to staff development program. The publication is divided into two major parts: (1) a section on organization theory, and (2) a section on administrative aspects of staff development. (BP)

ED 027 564

Administrative Approaches to Staff Development in Public Welfare Agencies

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY HEW, Off of Health, Ed & Welfare TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

ED027564

Administrative Approaches to Staff Development in Public Welfare Agencies

by Eleanor K. Taylor, Eulene Hawkins, and Hilda P. Tebow
Training and Manpower Development Specialists

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Dept of Health Ed. & Welfare TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Social and Rehabilitation Service . . . 1968

AA 003 463

Contents

	Page
INTRODUCTION	iii
ORGANIZATION THEORY AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION	1
Coordinating Task Groups	2
Veto Groups	2
Value Conflicts	4
Organizational Patterns	5
Overlays	6
Theories as Tools	8
Problems of Adaptation	9
Shift From Training Activities to a Training Program	11
ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC WELFARE AGENCIES	12
Tempo of Change in Public Welfare	12
Economic and Social Changes	13
Program Changes	14
Staff Development as Part of a Changing Program	14
Organizational Structure and Work-Flow Patterns	17
Implications for Working Relationships	18
Planning Action in Administration	19
Programing for Staff Development	20
CONCLUSION	22

Introduction

The quality of the services provided by a public welfare agency—like that of the services or products offered by all agencies and organizations—is directly related to the competence of its staff. And staff competence, in turn, is directly related to agency efforts to recruit and retain personnel and to provide for their continuing growth in their profession—in other words, for staff development. As a result, the importance of a staff development program in the agency administrative structure and in coordinating staff effort has been increasingly recognized.

The public welfare agency shares with most modern organizations the growing emphasis on coordination in administration. It operates in the same social and economic climate that they do, and its administrative patterns have followed basically the same lines. According to recent theories of organization, both nonprofit institutions and business have shown a trend toward the sharing of responsibility by executive and workers and away from dependence on a chain of command, from executive to workers. In both, morever, the development of specialized tasks has followed the same general pattern, with the various groups performing those tasks working together to achieve the goal, whether it is services or profits.

In welfare agency and business organization alike, the typical organization chart places a worker or unit according to the assigned function and specifies channels of communication and levels of authority. But men and women do not fit neatly into an organization system

and stay there. Modifying forces develop, and relationships are constantly shifting.

The administrator who is aware of the interrelationship of tasks and the changing relationships of workers can act to set an effective pattern for the flow of work. To be effective, however, his action must be based on an administrative philosophy that is clear to all staff. Each staff member should be given an opportunity to understand the need for change, to take part in reviewing possible alternatives, and to learn that a new way may be more satisfactory than the old, for himself as well as the agency. He thus shares in the advantages that the new systems approach brings to the organization.

Implicit in the administrator's efforts in this area is recognition of the function of staff development as an integral part of the organization. Certain questions are basic when that function is being established. The answers must take into account the organizational pattern of tasks, the relationship to outside groups and value conflicts, and the possibility that functions may shift as new job priorities are set. They must also be based on the assumption that the staff development director will share actively and equally with other top staff in such agency activities as planning new programs, revising old ones, shifting personnel—in short, in making decisions. All answers have implications both for working relationships and for organizational relationships.

Because some public welfare agencies are large and some small, because some administer many programs and others only a few, and because some may be able to afford highly competent staff and others have only limited funds, no strategy for establishing a fully operating staff development program can be precise. Among the necessary elements, however, are top-staff conviction of the value of cooperative planning, development of new ways of working together to meet program goals, and recognition of the possible shifts in assignments and in relationships among colleagues that may result. A vital factor is the setting up of a formal structure for planning, staffing, and evaluating a program.

The pages that follow present the organizational problems faced by public agency administrators and staff today in expounding and administering meaningful programs; underline some principles that may suggest ways of carrying out administrative response in the public welfare agency more easily and effectively; and apply those principles to the staff development program, which is an essential part of administration in the agencies.

The opinions presented are those of the authors, and statements do not necessarily reflect official policies of the Social and Rehabilitation Service.

Organization Theory as a Tool for Effective Administration

Organizations are undoubtedly older than recorded history, as the need for a sharing of tasks has always brought about a division of labor. There are immeasurable differences, however, between the earlier organizations and those of today—differences produced by the variety and range of tasks in the modern organization but particularly differences produced by the nature of the social matrix in which they are embedded. The administrative structure of the public welfare organization, like that of other organizations, reflects those differences.

The factors that have accelerated the change to today's complex organization, such as increased scientific and technological development and accompanying task specialization, come from the general social system. The "task environment"—the economic, social, and cultural climate in which they operate—is thus the same for all institutions and organizations. The changing pattern also stems from the change in the nature of knowledge itself and the rapidity with which specialized knowledge becomes obsolete.

The organizational problems at issue today—in the public welfare agency as well as in business and industry—are those of effectively coordinating a network of relationships that have become increasingly complex. The trend is toward arrangements that allow shared responsibility in the setting of goals and their attainment. Leadership is seen as a coordinating function rather than the exercise of authority.

COORDINATING TASK GROUPS

The differences between business and industrial organizations and such service organizations as public welfare agencies have sometimes obscured the fact that in both the development of specialized tasks has followed basically the same pattern. A concomitant development is the shifting pattern of relationship between line and staff personnel, which can be seen equally in military, business, and service agencies.

The importance of increased coordination among task groups of specialists is evident both in the organization intent on profits and in the service agency. It may be argued that the service organization—in this instance the public welfare agency—has a built-in purpose that accelerates the demand for coordination. Recognition of the human elements involved in carrying out the purpose of the public welfare agency is implicit in its overall goal—the meeting of common human needs. To ensure effective service, the natural development here would seem to be decisions made by a group, of which the worker who gives the service is a part.

The special character of the public welfare organization, moreover, multiplies the number of forces that influence the formulation of agency policy and its carrying out. The decision-making process goes on at three levels of government. Intergovernmental complexity, the sheer number and diversity of the units involved, their geographic spread, and the variation in the resources available to them combine to make effective collaboration a minor miracle. At the heart of the dilemma is the dual responsibility for giving individualized service to persons and families who number in the millions. Public welfare has become a large-scale operation.

The agency seeking to coordinate planning finds several hurdles in its path. For one, the necessary steps are often so complicated that meaningful participation in planning is often denied to those mostly likely to be affected by it. Another obstacle is the time lag between the first and the final decisions, which often has the effect of neutralizing or contradicting actions taken at the different levels. (It is no accident that such an incredible verb as "finalize" has crept into the executive's vocabulary.) A third obstacle is the form in which the decisions are communicated—as legal notices, formal letters, and memorandums that take on the tone of a directive.

VETO GROUPS

Still another element that must be considered is the influence of "veto" groups. In a large organization, few important decisions are made by any one person. They are, instead, the product of a give-and-

take process in which those who have some special interest in the decision and those who have special knowledge to contribute to it take part.

Welfare programs necessarily reflect the dilemma inherent in the social problems with which they attempt to cope. The contradictory motives of compassion and control that lie back of both voluntary and government welfare services are hard to reconcile in government programs that are accountable to a whole series of publics.

The veto groups within the public welfare organization multiply with the number of government levels involved. Whether the agency is a branch of a local government or the local branch for a State-administered program, welfare services covered by the Social Security Act must have some State supervision and financial participation to qualify for Federal grants-in-aid. Federal approval of State plans, review of operations, and various other devices extend the decision making from local agency to Federal agency. Immediate responsibility for working with the client and those directly involved in his situation falls to the social worker, but he must relay his decision through memorandums, records, and forms to supervisor and director for their review. Nor does the decision end with the local administrator. For he, in turn, is accountable to local administrative boards or commissions and the State agency.

Even in the smallest rural agency, where all duties of administrator-supervisor-caseworker are carried by a single individual and the circumstances of the person seeking help may in some measure be known, the application and the decision-making processes may be rigidly structured. Emergencies may be met more immediately than in a large agency and planning may be simpler, but the service provided must still fall within statutory and administrative limits.

Public welfare agencies, like all public organizations, are also answerable to many outside groups. Sometimes a State legislature or a congressional committee is dissatisfied with the information received through the usual reporting machinery, regarding it as filtered, and demands additional checks. The Federal Government may also ask for a special audit. In recent years, for example, participation by the U.S. General Accounting Office was required in the review of the program of aid to families with dependent children.

At the Federal level a different but comparable interagency involvement is evident with respect to exchange of information between the Social and Rehabilitation Service and the Social Security Administration. Moreover, all Federal agencies must answer to the Bureau of the Budget. That Bureau's control extends beyond financial matters to approval of details of operation within a given agency, such as questionnaires issued by the Social and Rehabilitation Service. This

pervasive veto power by successive parties inside and outside the system has serious consequences for the public welfare program.

Involving as it does so many conflicting goals, public welfare is also constantly subject to additional strains. Some critics accuse the welfare agencies of perpetuating the problems they were expected to solve. Assistance payments are interpreted as creating dependency or encouraging illegitimacy. Analysts like Edgar May, though sympathetic with the problems confronting the welfare programs, argue that agencies must face up to the interrelationship of their problems and those of other community agencies. The seventh grade teacher who promotes a child, even though he cannot read, may be determining in the schoolroom the future intake of the public welfare agency. When this happens the agency becomes the "funnel of failure."

VALUE CONFLICTS

The fact that public welfare is a government service creates still another organizational dilemma. Solution by consensus, a traditionally acceptable and equitable method of determining program goals and setting standards for their realization, does not readily apply in this area of basic human needs. Although at the Federal level the professional cadre drawn from social work takes social work's thinking and philosophy as a guide, many administrators and other personnel at the local levels share more closely the social values of the general community than those of the professional group.

The local agency staff members are especially subject to the pressures stemming from the unresolved conflict in the public mind about the causes of dependency and the agency's role in alleviating it, for it is they who actually meet the client face to face. In carrying out their day-to-day tasks, workers often reflect their uncertainties in a mixture of severity and sympathy. They are doubly burdened because the veto group to which they are legally answerable is often at odds with professional social work's system of values, with its emphasis on unlimited services and its rejection of the organizational layers that separate the person in need from those responsible for final decisions about him.

Nor have the changes introduced by recent amendments to the Social Security Act resolved the conflicting pressures coming from within and outside the welfare system. The intent now written into law gives sanction to purposes identified as those of social work, but the program has been grafted onto a relief system that has inherited its philosophy and methods from the early poor laws.

There are those who maintain that the original intention of providing financial assistance was to help people and that the emphasis

on the negative aspects of eligibility determination, pervaded as it has often been by the spirit of "finding people out," is contrary to the basic intention. Others distrust, as thinly disguised efforts to control clients in the interest of the "Establishment," the rehabilitative aim declared in agency purposes. In the face of such conflict it becomes important to determine just how pervasive the disagreement is.

A closer examination of the arguments may show that there is not the disparity that appears on the surface. As Sue Spencer reminds us:

"By and large the social welfare agencies do have the same long-range goals as those which are generally held by the public: The provision of good home life and rearing of children; the fulfillment of personal and financial responsibility to one's dependents; the development of one's capacities for useful living; the humane care of the sick and helpless; and the curbing of crime and deliquency. The difference or gap occurs primarily through lack of understanding of the methods to achieve their ultimate objectives." [1]

Perhaps the agency itself needs to reexamine its programs and determine whether its short-term goals conflict with the pursuit of its long-term goals. What is the meaning of a restricted budget in terms of helping individuals to become rehabilitated? Is the test of a program's success the speed with which relief costs go down? These and similar questions must be faced.

ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

As a framework for the clustering of tasks considered essential for each function, public welfare agencies use job-specification outlines to set the boundaries for the worker's responsibilities and a pattern for coordination. But even when priorities are given to some tasks rather than others and those others are, in turn, allocated time, the result is the barest of scripts to guide activities, and the worker must improvise and ad lib. For an understanding of organizational behavior, the important relationships between individuals and between groups must first be understood.

The structure of the organization gives the situational boundary within which staff interaction takes place; it provides the grid for contact points and specifies zones of mutual dependence. The little black boxes of a welfare agency's typical organizational chart place an individual or unit according to the assigned function and point out the approved channels of communication and levels of authority. Theoretically, at least, the chart represents the flow of decision making, and

[1] Spencer, Sue, "Administrative Process," in *Social Welfare Administration,* Columbia University Press, 1961, page 40.

all decisions are "finalized" at the top. The shape is characteristically a pyramid.

In trying to see the meaning of such a pattern, it must be remembered that relationships are constantly shifting and changing. Placing the individual in the system is merely locating him in a delicately balanced equilibrium.

"The organization is really an uneasy holding company of individuals reacting as individuals; individuals reacting as parts of small face-to-face groups; and individuals reacting also as parts of smaller organizations. Always there is the individual as an adaptive organism at one end of the scale—and the organization at the other. In between there may be an infinite number of constellations which influence the total behavior of an organization. The point deserves to be emphasized. Individuals do not divorce themselves from their own norms, attitudes, and personality needs simply because they join an organization; neither do they necessarily sacrifice their own dependence on various types of group and associational memberships. Only if we understand the full range of loyalty options open to an individual in the average situation do we begin to sample the complexity of organization and the patterns of behavior within it." [2]

Human beings, moreover, do not fit neatly into their organizational system. They sometimes collide by inadvertence, by default, or by design. At the same time their roles are always reciprocal; each role involves at least one other.

When we take into account the number of influences that color the individual's perception of his own responsibilities and rights, it is evident that there are many shadings from which confusion or conflict may result. The public welfare worker, like everyone else, is subject to the needs and drives, characteristic of his basic personality, that consciously govern what he expects of himself in any situation. He is guided by what he interprets as the usual way in which the function he undertakes has been carried on before or, if it is a new duty, by what he brings from past experience to invest in the new. He reacts to the manner in which those with whom he shares tasks carry out their part of the common obligation.

OVERLAYS

The modifying forces that affect the way roles are carried out never appear on the traditional public welfare organizational chart. The official version of what the formal lines of communication should be suggests only a direct flow of decision making to the executive

[2] Pfiffner, John M., and Sherwood, Frank P., *Administrative Organization,* Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960, page 34.

level. In such a pattern, accountability is easily traced. Line-staff relationships form a simple pyramid, with communication flowing through a close network of decision-making centers. Functional contacts and authority fit together in a neat pattern.

There are, however, many other communications that enter into the flow of day-by-day relationships between individuals and groups within the organization. The concept of "overlays" is one way of summing up the many modifying forces that make the actual operation of an agency so different from the paper model that is expected to guide the flow of work.

This generalization about organizational behavior takes into account the fact that the interaction between individuals or units cannot be expected to follow the prescribed lines of the organizational chart and is only to be understood as a dynamic interplay of relationships occurring together and affecting each other.

A 1960 study used sequential diagrams to show the process as a transparent layering of influences superimposed on the formal organization. Five overlay patterns were considered basic:

"The sociometric overlay, which consists primarily of the contacts people have with each other because of personal attraction. These relationships exist in every organization and may or may not approximate the pattern postulated by the job-task pyramid.

The functional overlay, which arises out of the relationships created by technical experts who exercise a type of authority because of their superior knowledge and skills. The relationships are unique in depending in such large measure on intellectual factors.

The decision overlay, which evolves from the conceptualization of orders and commands as steps in a process, moments in the interweaving of experience. Decisions are part of a network of influence and in this sense are related closely to patterns of power and authority.

The power overlay, which in organization life is frequently summed up by the expression, "the person to see." Power in the past has often been regarded as synonymous with authority. In more recent years power has been viewed in more personal terms; and it may or may not be legitimate in the sense of having formal sanction.

The communication overlay, which involves the entire process by which information and perceptions are transmitted throughout the organization. Some writers consider the influence of communication so great as to dominate all organization theory." [3]

Seen in this context, organizational relationships assume a form more dynamic than that represented in the traditional agency chart,

[3] *Ibid.*, pages 31-32.

and the forces of power and authority are more readily grasped. The exceptions from the contacts assumed to be taking place between individuals and units are not necessarily counterinfluences intended to subvert the purposes of the organization. It is a commonplace of operations that individuals do carry their tasks in a way that from time to time will vary from the officially designated manner for their working relationships. The organizational chart and manual represent, however, the agreed-upon relationships designed to facilitate the flow of work. When they are disregarded it is a clue that some restructuring of working relationships may be necessary.

With the rapid expansion of welfare programs and the growing need for specialists as technical knowledge increases, the organizational chart for the future can no longer be represented by the traditional pyramidal form. Some experts see it represented more accurately by a rectangle, and others visualize two distinct organizations that are within one structure but employ different methods of control, communication, and rewards.

One analysis, looking ahead to the general impact of the new technology, sees the organization split horizontally.[4] If the work of middle management is increasingly programed, it warns, those "at the top" will not only be "released to think" but "forced to think." In an atmosphere of continuous change and increasing obsolescence there will be constant pressure to restructure the organization. Top-management groups will grow in size, the study says, and a new administrative role will emerge, that of the "committor," who will have the specific function of approving or vetoing decisions from the alternatives provided by programers. It is evident from these predictions that the future organization will make heavy demands on line-staff relationships. The span of executive control will widen at one level and flatten at another. The modifying forces depicted in the concept of overlays will grow correspondingly more complex.

THEORIES AS TOOLS

Discussion of theory seems to many public welfare administrators a wasteful interruption. They would rather trust to the knowledge built up through actual coping with day-to-day problems than rely on pat answers drawn from abstract theory. Some executives have grown increasingly aware, however, that theory and practice are inseparable. They concur in the belief that even those administrators who seem to be "flying by the seat of the pants" fly best when they are conscious of the dangers of relying on experience alone. Practice must be system-

[4] Leavitt, Harold J., and Whisler, Thomas L., "Management in the 1980's," in *Readings in Management,* South-Western Publishing Co., 1963, pages 34 and 45.

atized into a method. Theory offers a frame of reference for sorting out why a solution worked in the past and what elements can be applied in a new situation.

This presentation has the limited goal of underlining some principles that may suggest ways of carrying out administrative responsibilities in a public welfare agency more easily and more effectively. With a conscious awareness of the interrelationship of tasks, the administrator may more readily help set an effective pattern for the flow of work. Crisis can be minimized, and support and stability provided. The administrator's own importance as a cohesive force grows with the ever-increasing complexity of the organization. More and more he must delegate duties, yet he must still ensure that delegated tasks are actually carried out as intended. His "span of control" is stretched by new demands for programing responsibility, with few if any precedents to guide him.

The role of the specialist poses real administrative problems. Adding to the number of specialized groups within an organization must inevitably add to the number of bases from which decision can be made. One may not agree either that the "staff-line" exception to the "normal" chain of command comes close to being the rule or that in government, in hospitals and universities, and in laboratories and most service organizations it never existed. Few, however, would doubt that the executive no longer enjoys the satisfaction he used to derive from clear lines of authority, deciding what to do and seeing it done.

In the public welfare agency the definition of the specialist's role is further complicated by his relations within the organization with other specialists as well as with superiors and subordinates. Conflicts within divisions and units must be handled with as much finesse as those that occur between large functional groups. The supervisor must not only act as a "linking pin" at every level, he must help in the adaptation to needed organization change.

PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION

A more or less precise pattern for the flow of work exists in all organizations. In large and complex organizations the fact that the individual's contribution has limited value unless it occurs at the right time and place often results in apparently trivial rules about, for example, the order in which mail is to be read or telephone calls made. Such devices for seeing that work sequence follows a predetermined plan, as well as the administrator's responsibility for control, are sym-

bolized in the accepted "institutional plagiarism" [5] of writing over the boss's signature.

In a public welfare agency the work-flow pattern poses special problems conditioned by the agency's commitment. Subtle factors of linkage are involved in coordinating the separate but related tasks of worker, supervisor, and specialist. The responsibility of each has an added dimension, growing out of shared accountability for direct service to client and community.

Professional practice, as well as organization demands, has encouraged a system in which the judgment of those working directly with the client is supported by that of supervisors and specialists. In a similar way the formal relationships prescribed in the public welfare agency for worker-client exchange are consistent with both professional and agency purposes, just as keeping records confidential satisfies simultaneously the profession's insistence on privileged communication and the agency's demands for organizational control.

There are points, however, at which conflict may develop. Because of the variety and number of supervisory and specialist staff used in the public welfare agency, effective teamwork has become increasingly complicated. In situations where professional conviction lies back of the specialist's sense of his contribution, ideological conflicts may undermine the organization's mission.

The most obvious problem with which public welfare administrators have to grapple is the human tendency of specialists and supervisors to assume a more directive role. Advice giving or consultation has to be built into the system if the services of specialists are to be used constructively. When each individual is dependent on the next to complete his own work, he tends to try to control his place in the system. He may try to influence decisions at an earlier or later stage. If he provides a "decision" rather than advice and alternatives from which the administrator may choose, the specialist is moving into the administrative line.

The potential for conflict is always present. Where tradition has prescribed a rigid separation of line from staff, it is important that the administrator understand the consequences of any shifts and their likely effect for the whole organization. Nor can he forget that consultants and advisors chosen for their knowledge and skill should have their hearing; what has been called organizational "due process" must be assured.

There can be no absolute answers about the most effective kinds of administration. But there are clues to action that seem consistent, given the organizational goals, the functional alignments, and the task assignments. The chief importance of a clear identification of the

[5] Thompson, Victor A., "Conflict," in *Modern Organization,* Alfred A. Knopf, 1964, page 97.

administrative philosophy guiding a public welfare organization is that it permits an understanding of the work patterns consistent with that philosophy and the possible consequences of introducing new elements. The administrator must also recognize clearly his own role and the impact of his own philosophy.

SHIFT FROM TRAINING ACTIVITIES TO A TRAINING PROGRAM

For the individual, change may come about accidentally—through misunderstanding what is expected—or through inventiveness in carrying out tasks. For the public welfare agency a new "style" that may either improve or lessen the effectiveness of the program develops in much the same way. To the extent that change can be planned, it is essential to take into account the degree of change involved. Introduction of a staff development program, which has so pervasive an influence throughout a public welfare agency, results in new demands on all staff, and extensive ramifications are predictable. Thus the *fact of change* needs careful definition.

Bringing into the picture those affected is not only their due but, in practical terms, permits staging and timing to be worked out with less difficulty. Agency routine has to go on while change is being effected. It is simple prudence to recognize the natural emotional reflex of men and women whose accustomed way of acting is being altered. Apparent or real loss must be compensated for as much as possible. Individuals and groups should have an opportunity to understand the need for change, to review possible alternatives, and, it is hoped, to learn that a new way may be at least as satisfactory as the old.

The shift in public welfare agencies from training activities to a training program has been a result of administrative conviction that one way of strengthening an agency's overall effectiveness is to reenforce, through group participation that heightens their achievement, the gains made by individuals. To allow for sequence and continuity, training should be so patterned that there will be a built-in contact with sources of information within and outside the organization. The possible ways of looking at a given problem and therefore of resolving it should be increased, with more time allowed for analysis and exploration and more opportunity for generating ideas.

The staff development division should provide leverage for constructive change. The administrative philosophy most in keeping with divisional and agencywide goals would seem to be a "systems" approach, with its emphasis on integrating mutually dependent groups and relating the organization, in turn, to the other agencies and institutions that constitute the larger task environment.

Administrative Aspects of Staff Development in Public Welfare Agencies

The public welfare agency, like other organizations, is affected by new administrative patterns. One result has been a heightened awareness of the essential nature of staff development programs, their pervasive influence on the quality of agency services, and their place in the administrative structure.

The Federal Government has encouraged staff development activities by sharing in their costs and has actively supported the establishment of training programs by State public welfare agencies. In addition, State agencies administering the public welfare programs are required to include in their plans provisions for an organized staff development program. That requirement and the accent on services in recent amendments to the Social Security Act have given added impetus to organizational recognition of the staff development function as an essential part of the administrative structure.

TEMPO OF CHANGE IN PUBLIC WELFARE

As public welfare agencies, to meet new or newly recognized needs, have restuctured assignments, increased cooperation with other agencies, and planned further for purposeful teamwork, both inside and outside an agency, new approaches to administration—new ways

for agency staff to work together—have been necessary. The legislation of the 1960's has not provided solutions to administrative problems; instead, it has added to them by expanding the scope of services that agencies can provide. To meet the increased demand for services that has resulted, there must be comprehensive planning not only for maximum use of all resources and manpower but for development of new resources. Recruitment, selection, and differential use of staff and provision for an adequate program of education and inservice training are essential.

The rapid expansion of specialized positions and the establishment of functional units to assume responsibility for aspects of administration that affect all parts of the public welfare agency, as well as the services that reach clients and communities in all programs, have been vitally significant developments. They are developments that have brought with them many problems related to administrative organization and structure—the placement of a new function or a changed focus for one already established, a clear definition and general understanding of the function and its relationship to other functions, the best use of staff at a time of rapid and significant agency changes, recognition of and planning for change, and realistic expectations of the function itself. To understand the present status of the staff development programs and to ensure constructive results, these problems must be identified and an effort made to cope with them.

The public welfare programs, like all other public programs, represent the Nation's concern for the well-being of its citizens. State agency programs reflect a similar concern of a State for its citizens since each State, through its legislative process, has made the basic determination to administer a program and has made appropriations to finance it. Legislation at both Federal and State levels provides either in general terms or in specific detail for the content and scope of the programs, for their administration within a defined framework, and for their financing. Development of programs within that framework to ensure that they meet the individual, family, and community needs toward which they are directed is thus a shared Federal-State responsibility.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES

The years since the shared responsibility for the welfare programs was established have been years of change: change in the economy of the Nation and of States, change in population groupings, change in technology and in the skills required and available, and change in the standards of living for the population as a whole. These changes in our society are reflected in provisions for change in programs administered by the public welfare agencies.

Technological advances, continued development of knowledge in the areas of administration and organization to meet the needs of a changing society, and study of individual and group behavior in administrative settings have brought with them revisions in administrative philosophy, organization, and role expectations in different agencies and within different units of agencies at all levels of government. Thus, change is an ever-present factor both in society and in those institutions established to meet society's needs.

PROGRAM CHANGES

Recognition and understanding of the concept of change, and of the ability to respond, are essential for responsible administration of all programs. Change to some degree has characterized the public welfare programs since their inception. The degree and tempo of change brought about by the 1962 and 1967 amendments, however, will have a greater impact on agencies than all earlier changes within the programs since the original Social Security Act was passed in 1935. Over the years the administrative organizational patterns of the Federal and State agencies, established in conformity with the original Act, had changed gradually as staff were added and the location of some units was moved. Relationships, functions, and basic organizational patterns, however, had remained much the same.

One significant feature of the many public welfare amendments is the growing Federal commitment to a service goal. The intent now written into the law gives Government sanction to purposes identified with social change. The emphasis on training is a consequence.

The 1962 and 1967 amendments carried forward the earlier modifications of the Social Security Act and, in addition, made certain provisions mandatory for Federal sharing of costs. A shift in assumptions about program priorities and intergovernmental relations has been the result.

Not only have the Federal requirements set a new direction but they have had direct administrative consequences for the State partners in the Federal-State system. As the States continue to revise their plans in line with the amendments, realignment of functions may call for actual structural alterations and redefinition of duties.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF A CHANGING PROGRAM

The 1962 provision for increased Federal sharing in the cost of training public welfare personnel recognized (1) that it is only through staff that the services can be provided and (2) that there is

a direct relationship between the nature of a task and the skills required for successful performance. Federal policy in the area of staff development is based on Federal acceptance of responsibility for securing the resources necessary to carry out a program and for making those resources available to State agencies that accept broadened program responsibilities, requiring a different kind of staff competence.

The current State plan can be seen as an instrument for making administration at the State level more dynamic in that it encompasses a goal, progressive planning directed toward that goal, and, of necessity, periodic assessment and consideration of change.

The concept of the State plan that provides for progressive program development is realistically related to certain administrative concepts when administration is viewed as a process. The concepts involve—

(1) determination of goals

(2) acquisition of resources necessary to attain goals

(3) allocation of resources

(4) maintenance of operations to produce desired results

(5) evaluation

(6) accountability for use of resources.

Staff development policy is consistent with the broad goals of the Federal agency and of the different programs. At the same time, it establishes a framework that admits recognition of differences in the programs and in the responsibilities accepted by States. In brief, it—

(1) provides for a staff development unit with the essential kinds of competence;

(2) is related to the special kinds of competence needed in the different units of the agency and in programs requiring specialized knowledge or skill in planning, direction, or direct practice; and

(3) sets long-range and interim goals related to the program goals to be achieved.

The problem then for State public welfare agencies has become one of planning and introducing the staff development function as an element of administration or of making necessary changes in that function in an already established structure and within already established agency relationships. The resulting situational change varies with the particular administrative structure. In a State-administered program, the realignment takes place primarily within the State agency, with resulting modifications at the local level.

In agencies that had not recognized staff development as a functional part of administration, training was the responsibility of individual staff designated as staff development personnel, of specialists or supervisors, or of others because of their special knowledge in the area to which they were assigned. Here the staff development activities were usually concentrated in selected subject areas, selected positions, or selected units. Even when combined or expanded, however, they did not constitute a staff development program.

Neither does the employment of staff development personnel, of itself, establish the function. Responsibility for planning, directing, and carrying out a staff development program must clearly be assigned by the administrator. Placement of responsibility should definitely indicate the program's scope, its position in the administrative structure, and its relationships with the administrator and other State administrative staff.

It may be that an administrator decides to place the function of staff development in an already established framework where it will share with older divisions the responsibility for the entire agency program. Without staff awareness of the situational change that is introduced, a disequilibrium of forces within the agency may be created. Unless the addition of the staff development specialist is recognized as a change that affects assignments and responsibilities in other agency units and unless relationships are realigned, energy is diverted from understanding and moving to attain agency goals and objectives to conflicts resulting from misunderstandings.

If the staff development function is to be an integral part of State and local agency operations, the director of staff development must participate in planning and decision making with the executive and other top-level administrative staff—a group known in some agencies as the "executive cabinet." Their concern is with determining program goals, setting staff responsibilities, and modifying existing programs or establishing new ones. Their leadership in marshaling the agency's staff resources is indispensable.

Within the staff development program of a public welfare agency, organized efforts fall into two major areas: inservice training and, on a selective basis, substantial academic study in professional and technical fields for persons employed or preparing for employment in public assistance programs.

To be successful, a staff development program must ensure

- identification of training needs on a long-term and current basis for groups of staff as well as for individuals;
- use of the administratively planned and implemented methods of training available within the State agency and its subdivisions;

- use of educational resources outside the agency in accordance with the special needs of individual staff members; and
- establishment of policies concerning the rights and obligations of personnel with respect to training and technical and professional education, the educational requirements for various positions, training leave for short-time study, and attendance at professional conferences and meetings. [6]

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND WORK-FLOW PATTERNS

In establishing a fully operating staff development program, certain basic questions need attention. The answers must take into account the aspects of organizational theory discussed earlier in this document—the organization's patterning of tasks as it is related to veto groups and value conflicts, the concept of overlays, and shifts in function as new task priorities are set. An important factor is the philosophy of the administrator in these areas. It can move members of his staff either to creative use of their knowledge and skills or to restrictive use, and it therefore determines the quality of the agency services.

The authority structure of an agency as defined in organizational charts attempts to set the formal structure for decision making. The working relationships of staff at the administrative and supervisory levels, however, are a major factor in determining the kinds of decisions they will make. Formal or organizational power has been described earlier as one of the "overlays" and typically follows the same lines as the decision-making structure of the agency. That power is typically recognized as the power of the administrator to promote, the power to give recognition and rewards, the power to release a staff member, etc. The more actively that power is used in an organization, the more likely it is that difficulties will be found in the working relationships.

Much of the power that one finds operating in an organization, however, may not be following a formal structure, since power can be found in any relationship in which one person's behavior can affect or influence another person. It can be found in friendships, in negotiation for the use of resources, in threats of reprisal, in the offering of rewards and opportunities, etc.

In some working relationships, one person asks another person to do something, but he has neither power nor authority to make him do

[6] For a detailed discussion of staff development as a concept, see Tebow, Hilda, *Staff Development as an Integral Part of Administration* (Public Assistance Report No. 35.) (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare), U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954, pages 2-4.

it. His only way of working may be to collaborate with him and to decide with him what is to be done. His contributions may be enhanced if, in his work with other staff members, he learns to use constructive methods of collaboration, consultation, and supervision. No one operates alone. Only when each staff member, working with others, commits his knowledge, skill, and judgment to making the organizational structure effective can a dynamic, creative agency be built and maintained.

IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Working relationships are interpersonal relationships carried on within the formal structure and limits of the organization—the agency. Those who work together must agree on their organizational relationship and see their roles the same way; otherwise, conflict is almost sure to arise. Improper assignment of incoming requests for assistance, for example, confuses staff members and often blocks their assumption of leadership in their functional or program areas. It may block the individual staff member from fulfilling his responsibility to make the agency mechanism work as well as possible—a responsibility that includes improving it when he can.

With the strong legislative emphasis on services to public welfare clients and with the Nation's heightened concern for the prevention of dependency and the restoration of clients to self-support, more and more is expected of the social worker in public welfare. What the community asks of public welfare will affect each social worker more than ever before and will influence his own attitudes and feelings, his knowing and understanding, and his skills and their reflection in his actions.

The skills required are essentially those of problem solving: ability to diagnose a situation or define the problem, to clarify the purpose, to define goals or directions, to recognize the required steps to the goal, and to assess and develop the resources available—in other words, a systems approach. Conscious recognition of each step is vital if administrative interaction to incorporate the required changes is to take place.

The most evident shifts resulting from the establishment of a comprehensive staff development program are in the traditional relationship between supervisor and social worker. The nature of the service task to which the agency is committed has created in all social agencies a type of supervisory relationship unique in organizations. Reliance on the supervisor's experience and knowledge for guiding the social worker has carried over from the apprenticeship pattern of education that preceded formal education in this profession. With the

training responsibilities formerly assigned to the supervisory function now included in the organized inservice training program, the learning and teaching roles became visible.

PLANNING ACTION IN ADMINISTRATION

The mission of every organization can be stated as a broad purpose, as objectives, functions, or responsibilities. One element in the mission of the public welfare program is provision of the services authorized in the 1962 and 1967 amendments. That legislation embodied a long-term goal for staff development, which can be broken down into specific goals with two characteristics—one relating to time and the other to number of staff. It set July 1, 1967, as the date by which the State agency must have not only a staff development director but also sufficient training personnel to provide organized training for all levels of staff.

All States have now met the basic requirements. Some, however, have been able to establish only skeleton programs, and they are working to put flesh on the bones. Others have built up a relatively strong staff development program but realize that keeping staff development operations effective calls for continuing effort.

The first step an agency takes toward the quantitative goal is *assessment*—the process of evaluating the number of training personnel needed, based on the physical and economic characteristics of the State, the stage of program development, staff qualifications, and workloads. The situation must be diagnosed and a *goal* set, and only then can a *plan* be made. *Action,* or the implementation of the plan, follows. Finally, in an *evaluation,* the agency considers the accuracy of the diagnosis, the validity of the plan, and the quality of the action.

Although we cannot blueprint the strategy for maintaining a fully operating staff development program, we can isolate some necessary elements in the strategy. The first requisite is that the main groups in the agency must be convinced that cooperative planning must be tried. Second, and perhaps more important, all groups must find new ways of working together and must recognize that shifts may occur both in the focus of their assignments and in their relationship to colleagues.

Establishment of a formal structure, such as the "executive cabinet," for planning, staffing, and evaluating a program is important. Program status implies and often engenders a power struggle. To what program, for example, are the staff returning from educational leave assigned? When some operation has to be eliminated or postponed because an emergency program is added, which one goes? The training sessions will go unless they are based on a total agency

commitment. The question is, "How can total agency commitment be accomplished?"

To be more concrete, let us look at the question of time for training sessions. Continuity is required in planning the administrative release of staff for blocks of time over extended periods. The factor of timing has administrative implications not immediately apparent. Unless a training program has been structured into an organization in its early stages of development, allocation of staff time for training purposes may seem to be at the expense of service needs, and training intended to support and further the overall agency program may seem to have its own self-aggrandizing purposes.

PROGRAMING FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

During the 5 years preceding July 1, 1967, public welfare agencies experienced dynamic changes not only in programs but also in administrative patterns. The formalized teaching responsibility formerly placed in administrative and supervisory positions is now assigned to training specialists in an administrative unit for staff development. The move has had two immediate results: (1) Scattered training activities have been brought into a patterned relationship with each other; and (2) relationships have been shifted within the agency, whether a new unit was established or an existing unit was modified.

As with any change in administrative patterns, there has been a corresponding change in the flow of work. To some staff the shift has meant job enlargement; to others a reduction in the variety of tasks. Change occurred—and is still occurring—in the day-to-day relationship of colleagues. It also took place—and is still taking place—at points of contact for persons within and outside the agency. Spheres of influence and power were affected.

To be specific, let us examine some of the changes that the director of the staff development unit may appropriately make. Initially, his job may have consisted of conducting orientation sessions, planning training activities for regular staff, and recommending employees for educational leave. Eventually he discovers that often he is not consulted or consulted too late to be effective, or that he is not given enough leeway to make effective recommendations.

His efforts to increase his effectiveness and that of his program may take any of several forms, singly or in combination. He may secure acceptance of his participation in any early discussions concerning new designs for program and policies and guideline materials for staff, to the end that training needs are considered at the same time as other requirements and given equal weight. He may establish communication with other units of the agency, such as the quality control or program

Conclusion

Factors that have produced the changes in the public welfare administrative structure can be identified as (1) recognition of the social problems resulting from the changes in our society that affect all large organizations and institutions; (2) dissatisfaction with the adequacy of the existing welfare system to meet changing needs; (3) change in leadership and goals at national, State, and local levels of government; and often (4) changes in agency leadership that have meant a different philosophy of administration and organization.

Attainment of program objectives is influenced primarily by the ability of agencies at all levels of government to identify change and absorb its impact. Agency leadership must anticipate the consequences of any change and help staff to prepare for them. Peripheral changes are readily absorbed, but changes that make new demands on staff and client groups may become crucial. The degree of change can be assessed by considering how many persons are involved, to what extent, and how. The target group can thus be prepared for change before the effective date of the change itself. In agencies that have sidestepped the responsibility, "resistance" characterizes those units that are in key positions for program implementation and evaluation.

Resistance itself must be recognized, and an attempt made to understand the source. To what extent is the idea itself admitted, accepted, or rejected? Resistance may come from a natural fear of upheaval and disorganization; it may be the reaction of an individual or group with a vested interest, to whom change means loss; it may

operations division, to identify the training needs of individual staff members and groups of staff. He may also work collaboratively with program specialists in the areas of child welfare, family services, health, homemaking, etc., to prepare and teach content for training sessions. Whatever the steps he decides on, it is important that the staff development director continue to evaluate the significance of his efforts, his own drives, and the strategies of others with whom he must interact.

The shifts in administrative patterns point up the oversimplifying assumptions of such organizational devices as static job descriptions and organizational charts. They also help the agency to anticipate further changes and prepare to evaluate them in order to concentrate on those that enhance the effectiveness of the total organization.

Each division in an agency is like the total agency in that it seeks to flourish in its environment. Unfortunately, the efforts of one group often conflict with those of other groups. The administrator of any agency must take into account this movement and conflict if he is to comprehend and deal with the organization as a process of human relations. From time to time, he must evaluate the experience to date and seek solutions for the identified problems.

As part of the evaluation the total agency must reexamine periodically all its procedures, routines, and the assigned responsibilities of top level administrative staff in attaining agency goals. To examine the limits of responsibility carried by each member and ways of improving collaboration, a log may be kept of each assignment. Where did it come from? Where did it go? What action was taken at each point of decision, coordination, or collaboration? Then an analysis may be made of the stream of decisions coming across each desk during a period of one week or more each quarter. On what points was the individual staff member able to make the final decision? And on what questions was collaboration with other administrative staff necessary? In this way, the role and function of each division can be clarified and shifts in administrative patterns identified and continued as situations change.

come from a sincere belief that what is proposed will not be in the best interest of the agency, its clients, or the community. Resistance may often, however, be a positive factor. It can be a clue to needed redefinition of short- and long-term goals, or it may be an indication that the full effects of change for some units of staff have not been recognized or adequately communicated. It thus can offer an opportunity for effectively working through a series of problems that must be resolved before change can be implemented.

The successful administrator at any level in the public welfare agency is one who recognizes that constructive change does not result simply from a written or oral directive, however clear, or a detailed presentation of the reasons for change, however persuasive. For large organizations it is, as one management study put it,

"primarily a question of alterations in the behavior of various *groups who carry major responsibility. Top management must recognize, therefore, that its success in carrying out the major changes will largely depend on how well it mobilizes the psychological forces that can facilitate acceptance of the new and how well it diminishes those forces which reinforce people's adherence to the existing pattern. The major approaches available to management are effective communication, the control of anxiety, and the learning of new skills.*"[7]

As new legislation is passed each year and as each State and local agency makes the adjustments necessary to take advantage of it, programs change. Changes cannot be effective without the help of informed staff who take an active part in implementing them. It follows that an important administrative aspect of staff development is to see that all staff are kept informed of changes and that they adapt the knowledge they already have for use in the new program and for making the agency ready to move ahead into the next new program.

[7] Ginsberg, Eli, and Reilley, Ewing W., *Effective Change in Large Organizations,* Columbia University Press, 1957.

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1968 O—310-940